

# ***Research on the Phenomenon of "Internalization of Public Examination" among University Students in the Post Epidemic Era and Its Impact on Economic and Social Development***

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**Abstract:** In 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic was brought under control to a certain extent, but the employment of college students in the post epidemic era is facing a completely new situation and challenges. China's "civil service fever" continues to heat up, due to excessive competition brought about by the examination of the public service "involution" problem on the personal development of college students and the sustainable development of the job market has had many impacts. This paper discusses the causes of the phenomenon of "civil service fever" in China, analyzes its impact on economic and social development, and puts forward relevant suggestions from the government, enterprises, universities and other perspectives. The study finds that the causes of the "internalization of the public examination" are concentrated in three aspects: the deterioration of the employment environment in the post-epidemic era, the special characteristics of civil service positions and family education, while the "internalization of the public examination" has both the positive effect of being able to improve the overall quality of the public service, and the negative effect of inhibiting the innovative ability of talents. The findings of this study are useful in promoting a stable supply in the labor market and stimulating economic and social vitality.

**Keywords:** post-epidemic era, involution, public exam fever, economic development

## **1. Introduction**

Since 2020, the new Crown Pneumonia epidemic has gradually been brought under control, but the uncertainty of the epidemic continues to have a profound impact on the country's development. The expansion of colleges and universities as well as the domestic and international economic development tends to slow down, the social absorption of fresh graduates of the post a negative growth trend, college students employment into the winter period [1]. According to the Ministry of Education, the size of the 2023 class of college graduates is expected to reach 11.58 million, and the number of college graduates has reached a record high, meaning that the number of people waiting to be employed in society will further increase, and the pressure of competition for employment will

intensify. Against this background, civil service positions have become the first choice of many university students because of their attractiveness in terms of stability, benefits and social status. As a result, in recent years, the pursuit of and competition for civil service positions by university students has begun to "involutionize".

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of studies related to the "internalization of the public examination". Li et al. analyzed the influencing factors of the willingness to take the public examination and concluded that family pressure, professional matching, ideal dedication, stabilization motivation, career prospects and other factors are important reasons affecting college students' willingness to take the public examination [2]. Han and Lian analyzed the impact of the "public examination internalization" on employment, and proposed that this phenomenon has a negative impact on the formation of the concept of occupational equality, and even strengthen the traditional cultural thinking of the official position, which is not conducive to the promotion of social innovation [3]. Liu et al. pointed out that the internalization of Kaogong reflects the immaturity of the contemporary college students' thinking and penetrates the incoherence of the social operation mechanism [4]. On the basis of previous studies, this study aims to explore in depth the reasons for the formation of the "involution" problem brought about by the public examination fever in the context of the post-epidemic era and its impact on the employment of college students, so as to provide useful ideas and suggestions for solving the employment dilemma of graduates.

## **2. Causes of the Formation of the Internalization of the Kao Kung**

The phenomenon of "civil service fever" can be traced back as far as 2003, when a wave of public service examinations was launched in society after the end of the SARS epidemic. In 2019, the sudden outbreak of new coronavirus pneumonia and the setback in economic development have revived the "public examination fever", and college students' pursuit of employment stability has increased significantly. In recent years, "involution" has been widely used in various fields, and different scholars have different interpretations of it. For example, Yang et al. pointed out that "involution" is not only a problem of excessive competition as currently stated, but also a social crisis of inefficient competition and ineffective development [5]. Kim et al. pointed out that "involution" refers to the state in which people have reached the limit of energy and resources invested in competitive activities but still fail to achieve the expected results, which in turn leads to the internal depletion of energy, and ultimately hovering at a low level without being able to move to a higher platform [6]. Thus, the "internalization of the examination" can be interpreted as a problem of excessive competition in the civil service examination.

### **2.1. Deteriorating Employment Environment in the Post-Epidemic Era**

The epidemic has had a huge impact on the global economy, with many industries severely affected and the job market becoming increasingly competitive. Traditional industries have been dealt a big blow, with enterprises recruiting less, affecting the employment prospects of college students majoring in related fields; while some emerging industries have shown positive growth momentum, they have also attracted a large influx of outstanding talents, leading to unusually fierce competition for jobs. According to the National Statistical Office, the youth unemployment rate has been located above 12% since 2020 and is generally on an up (Figure 1). It can be seen that university students are facing great competitive pressure in the job-seeking process. In this uncertain economic environment, civil service posts have become a relatively stable and safe option.

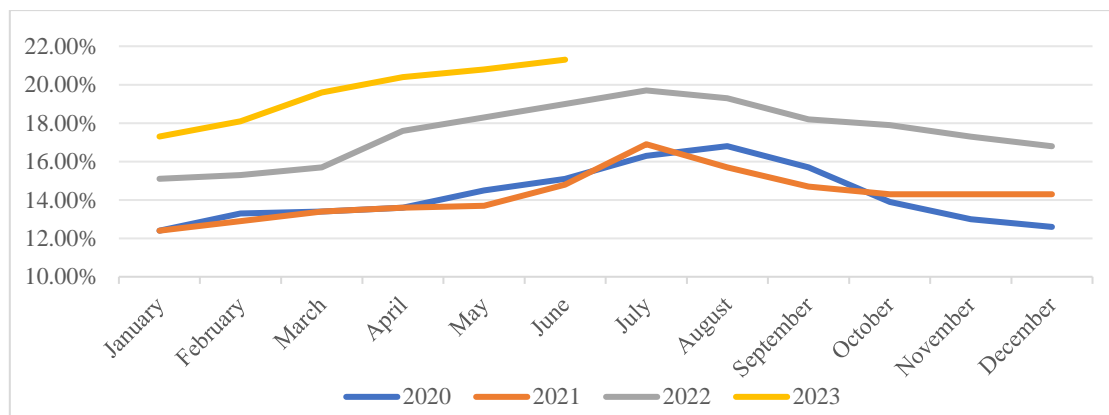


Figure 1: Youth unemployment rate, 2020-2023.

## 2.2. Specificity of Civil Service Posts

### 2.2.1. Relative Scarcity of the Number of Civil Service Jobs

In 2021, a total of 25,000 people were recruited for the state civil service, and in 2022, a total of 31,000 people were recruited for the state civil service, which is an increase in the scale of expansion compared to 2020, making the civil service examination influx of more college students. Post-epidemic era, the number of college graduates applying for the national civil service have increased year by year, the number of positions in the civil service recruitment is limited, but the number of applicants is often very large, the more disparate application ratio leads to the phenomenon of "civil service fever". According to data from the National Statistical Office, the competition ratio for civil service examinations is usually very high, with the competition ratio for some posts even reaching hundreds or even thousands of people competing for a single post, further aggravating the competition for civil service posts (Figure 2).

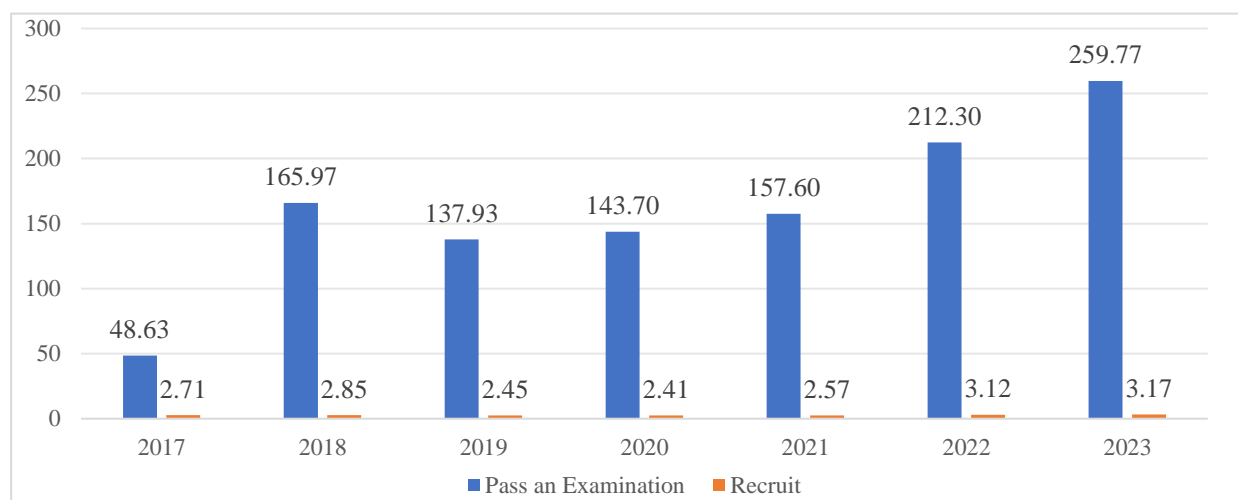


Figure 2: 2017-2023 State Civil Service Exam Applications and Recruitment.

### 2.2.2. Advantageousness of Civil Service Positions

While some private sector companies are competitive in terms of salary packages, civil service positions usually come with some unique benefits, such as higher job stability, pension, medical insurance, home purchase concessions, and so on. This has caused civil service positions to attract a

lot of attention in career choices, especially in the post-epidemic era, when the employment psychology of college students has shifted and the mentality of seeking stability dominates the job-seeking process, and as a relatively stable career choice, civil service positions are regarded as a responsible choice for the family and society. University students, when faced with employment pressure and family expectations, tend to choose relatively safe and stable career paths, and civil service posts are usually regarded as such a choice. At the same time, in the cultural background of China, the official-oriented thought of "learning is superior to serving" still influences college students to pursue career, and whether they can become an official seems to be the evaluation criterion of whether they are successful or not [7].

### **2.3. Impact of Family Education**

The influence of the family on an individual's career choice is also an important factor. First, as the standard of living improves and the pressure on the families of most students declines, some parents would rather let their children stay at home and prepare for examinations than let them "settle for second best" by taking up employment before choosing a career. Some families tend to encourage their children to take up civil service as a decent and stable career option. Family expectations and guidance about careers, as well as educational values within the family, can have a profound impact on an individual's career choices. However, an individual's career choice is the result of a combination of factors, and will vary from person to person due to differences in personal interests, motivation, educational background and career aspirations.

## **3. Impact of the "Internalization of the Public Examination" on Economic and Social Development**

On the one hand, the "internalization of the public examination" will bring in a large number of talents and promote the mobility of talents in society, which can, to a certain extent, attract more high-calibre talents to join the civil service and enhance the Government's overall capacity and efficiency, thereby helping to serve the public and better meet public demand. On the other hand, "involution" can lead to both individual and organizational inefficiencies [2]. For individual university students, since the quality resources provided by government departments are scarce, students will continuously increase their inputs in order to obtain the resources to maintain their advantages, which will bring about a decline in the "effort-return ratio", i.e. diminishing marginal returns. As far as the public sector is concerned, the problems of resource allocation and evaluation systems have led to excessive competition among university students, increasing the burden on candidates and causing students to spend time on meaningless "standardized" outputs when they should be developing their other individual abilities and interests, thus affecting the quality of civil service personnel training.

### **3.1. "Internalization of Public Examinations" Can Improve the Overall Quality of the Civil Service**

The current system of selection and recruitment of civil servants provides an extremely fair platform for everyone to compete, basically eliminating backroom operations, which indicates that society is more progressive, more equal and more just [8]. The optimization of the civil service selection system has led to an increased focus on the overall qualities of candidates, including knowledge, skills, moral character and leadership abilities. This can undoubtedly help improve the overall quality of the Civil Service and ensure that the selected officers are better equipped to perform their duties as civil servants. Therefore, in recent years, the civil service recruitment examination also attracted a large number of college graduates to participate, so that the government can have more and better choices, the introduction of many young, talented, creative talents to government agencies, and even the

"village officials", "three support a help," "selected students" and other grass-roots service positions are also full of attraction [9].

### **3.2. Negative Inhibition of Talent Innovation by the "Internalization of Public Examinations"**

Since entering the 21st century, the rise of a new wave of technological revolution and industrial change has meant that college students' career choices should focus more on the local real economy, livelihood areas, and scientific and technological innovation. However, as college students begin to tend to choose stable career paths in the post-pandemic era, they become risk-averse to innovation, leading to a decline in the incentive to innovate. The excessive competition caused by the internalization of the examination of the public, then in the process of civil service selection, in order to get a relatively fair examination results, the civil service examination evaluation system usually emphasizes the mastery of the standardized answers and the use of test-taking skills, and college students are more inclined to memorize and copy the known answers in the preparation for the examination than to try out the new solutions, which inhibits the development of individual innovative thinking and creativity, and produces a certain weakening effect on the innovative capacity of the talents. It can be said that the higher the degree of internalization, the stronger the negative spillover effect on college students' innovation [10]. The more detrimental to the innovative behavior of college students. The further spread of the "public examination fever" will undoubtedly lead to a large number of technical personnel in order to pursue the cost-effective value of labor costs and benefits and flock to the "public examination" ranks, so that the innovative ability that should be played by the inhibition of [11].

## **4. Recommendations for Countermeasures**

In the post-epidemic era, the tendency of university students to gravitate towards relatively regular and stable institutions has led to an increasingly serious "internalization of the public examination". The following countermeasures are proposed to mitigate this trend.

### **4.1. Expanding Supply in the Job Market**

First, governments can promote employment growth in specific regions or industries by formulating regional and industrial policies. Investments in infrastructure development, regional clusters and strategic industries create jobs and promote economic diversification. For their part, companies are happy to attract universities to work for them by raising the level of salaries and increasing employee benefits.

Second, Colleges and Universities Can Actively Carry Out University-Enterprise Cooperation, Helping Enterprises to Come into Contact with Outstanding Students at an Earlier Stage and Providing More Practical Opportunities for Graduating Job-Seeking Students. For Their Part, Enterprises Can Adopt a Variety of Working Methods, Including Temporary and Part-Time Workers and the Creation of Relevant Posts, So As to Share the Employment Pressure and Alleviate the Phenomenon of the "Internalization of the Public Examination".

### **4.2. Fulfilling the Guiding Role of Education**

Family has a certain pressure and influence on children's employment direction and pressure, parents should respect their children's employment wishes and employment direction, parents encourage their children to learn more about different industries, and rational planning career with their children [7]. At the same time, children should be helped not to be seriously bound by the official mindset.

Colleges and universities should actively provide students with internships and practice space, so that students can truly feel the working environment and situation of different industries, which can enable students to better understand the nature of the occupation, so as to make targeted choices. Students are guided to gain a deeper understanding of their own interests, strengths, career goals, personality preferences, etc., and to learn about the job content and prospects of other careers from different perspectives. Continuously improve the level of competence of students through study training and practice during the university period, and clarify the purpose of employment [12]. It drives college students into action to improve their abilities, avoid excessive competition, and find employment in a scientific and reasonable manner.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the causes and impact on economic and social development of the phenomenon of "public examination and internalization" of college students in the post epidemic era. Analysis of the reasons for the formation of the "public examination fever" found that the deterioration of the employment environment in the post-epidemic era, the special nature of the civil service positions and the traditional family education model is an important reason for the "examination of the public rolled up", and further analysis of the "examination of the public rolled up" caused by the impact of the impact of the existence of a double impact, conducive to improving the overall quality of civil servants at the same time, but is not conducive to the enhancement of the innovative capacity of the talent. On this basis, this paper summarizes how to expand the supply of the job market and play a guiding role in education in order to alleviate the trend of "internalization of the public examination".

However, in this paper, the impact of the "internalization of the public examination" has only been analyzed from a qualitative point of view, and further data can be collected for more in-depth argumentation in future studies.

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